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CULTURAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY AUASI HARBOR PROJECT
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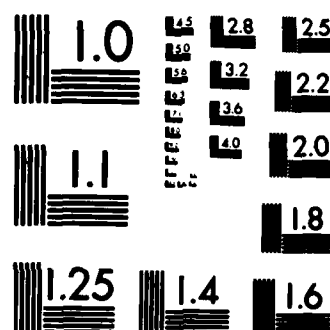
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
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CULTURAL RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY
AUASI HARBOR PROJECT
AUASI, TUTUILA ISLAND, AMERICAN SAMOA

by

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INTRODUCTION

The cultural reconnaissance survey of the Auasi Harbor Project area was conducted by staff of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum under contract to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The survey was conducted according to specifications in the Scope of Work dated 24 January 1977.

In preparation for the survey, a review was made of: (1) pertinent literature dealing with the cultural resources (primarily archaeological) of American Samoa; and (2) aerial photographs and color slides made available through Mr. Mike Lee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The literature survey included: (1) William Kikuchi's 1963 M.A. Thesis, "Archaeological Surface Ruins in American Samoa"; (2) K.P. Emory and Y.H. Sinoto's unpublished manuscript (1965), "Preliminary Report on the Archaeological Investigations in Polynesia: Field Work in the Society and Tuamotu Islands, French Polynesia, and American Samoa in 1962, 1963, and 1964"; and (3) an unpublished paper (1965) by Janet Frost, "Archaeological Investigations on Tutuila Island, American Samoa."

The preliminary examination of the photographs provided by the Army Corps and the literature review indicated that the prescribed area to be surveyed held little promise of the existence of archaeological or historic sites. The survey zone is only 100 to 150 ft wide, and is mostly beach terrace and sandy beach, covered at high tide. The earlier surveys, listed above, did not note the existence of any sites on the beach or in the survey area.

FIELDWORK

On the 29th of March, 1977, we were accompanied to Auasi Village by Mr. Tia Aina of the Public Works Office in Pago Pago. Mr. Aina arranged for us to meet with an elder, High Chief Fonoti Galu, to make known our plans and to obtain potentially useful information about the village area.

The High Chief was interviewed; Mr. Toni Maiava, a staff member of Bishop Museum, acted as interpreter. We were successful in eliciting names for traditional land divisions between the rocky points (headlands) that mark the lateral limites of the survey area (see Fig. 1). A list of these names appears at the end of the report. In addition, High Chief Galu gave us information regarding modern alterations of this zone. The most important of these was the removal of

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sand from the beach for fill in preparing the bed of the existing road that passes through the village. The road construction, a Public Works project, involved grading, leveling, and covering of the original surface. These alterations involved disturbance of most of the survey zone.

The landward limit of the survey area coincides with the passage of the modern road, which by virtue of its construction had obliterated any traces of surficial archaeological/historic remains. The degree to which the pre-road surface was cut and filled in unknown. Thus, while surface indications of prehistoric or early historic cultural activities are absent, there is still a possibility that deeper-buried habitation deposits exist in some locations. If this is true, the deposits must be located back of the present wave-cut bank, since no artifactual or midden materials were observed on the face of this bank. Examination of this terrace-front was made difficult in some spots because of recent cuttings (branches) placed along the bank to retard further erosion and slumping. Inspection of the bank was the primary focus of the survey, which did involve, however, walking over the entire area.

The absence of archaeological sites in the survey zone is obviously due in large part to the destructive processes described above, but there is another cultural-environmental factor that unquestionably has operated in the removal or displacement of surface remains. The amount of land available for habitation and subsistence on coastal flats, such as Auasi, is restricted by the coastal-interior extent of the plain, which terminates abruptly in high, precipitous cliffs. The physiography heavily influences land use, which can be characterized as intensive and extensive exploitation of what little area is available. Interrelated with this is the established Samoan tradition of reutilizing stones and coral from abandoned house platforms, or other such sites (Kikuchi 1963:32, 34; Emory & Sinoto Ms.:47). The consequences of this behavior on preservation of older structural remains are obvious. Under these circumstances, the lack of archaeological/historic remains in the narrow survey area is not surprising.

SUMMARY

A walk-through survey of the Auasi Harbor Project area revealed no remains of archaeological or historic sites, as was expected from pre-field review of aerial photographs and pertinent literature.

AUASI VILLAGE LAND DIVISIONS

Six place names, four of which were said to be traditional land divisions controlled by different high chiefs, were recorded in the interview with High Chief Fonoti Galu. Our informant claimed that the proper name of the point across the bay from Taugamalama Point, is Faasavaliga, not Maatulaumea Point as indicated on the U.S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey topographic map of Tutuila Island.

Beginning at Taugamalama Point, the land divisions are, in order: (1) Oloie, (2) Vaovai, (3) Siigavaa, and (4) Vaisa. Our informant claimed that the area encompassing Taugamalama Point and Oloie was controlled by High Chief Sigagege, while the inherited title he assumed was in control of Vaovai and Vaisa, extending up to the headland on the east side of the bay. Siigavaa was said to be ruled by the Saole title. Finally, the entire village of Auasi was said to be owned by the Amouli people.

Fig. 1
LIMITS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE SURVEY
AUAŌI HARBOR PROJECT
AUAŌI, TUTUILA ISLAND, AMERICAN SAMOA
Scale 1" = 200 Feet

